

Garnet Hizzey



Bill and Vicki Lee had an opportunity recently to sit down with Garnet to talk about his Boeing career and his activities since he retired. In September 1966, after graduating from Cranfield University in England with a Master of Science in Engineering, he went to work for Boeing as a Manufacturing Engineer (M.E.). It was very busy at Boeing in 1966 with a large number of new hires in the factory. Renton had acquired a new piece of equipment at the time that was used to hydro-form parts. You put a flat sheet on a bed and a high pressure bag

would come down and form it into the required shape. Due probably to the fact that Garnet had spent five years in an engine machine shop and assembly facility at Rolls Royce in England, his first Boeing assignment was to help the new machine operators to become effective. The Verson-Wheelon Bag Press had a capability of operating at 10,000 pounds per square inch. So the initial reaction of the operators when parts were not turning out per drawing was to “up the pressure.” On a couple of occasions this had disastrous consequences—they “burst” the bag. The result was an unholy, oily mess and serious loss in production while the machine was repaired. In time, the lesson was learned that “technique was much more important than muscle!”

A two years stint on the SST program was incredibly stimulating but the sudden collapse and resulting 9,000 layoff notices over-night left an indelible mark on his memory. Garnet returned to Renton to find that his former department had shrunk from over 1200 people to just 160—dark days indeed.

Garnet spent 34 years at Boeing and there were some very stressful times but also there were a lot of great experiences. Although employed as a Manufacturing Engineer, he was always getting pulled to work in the factory. Task Forces were set up to figure out how to streamline things to make the factory more efficient, fix a process that was holding up production, or eliminate serious cost and schedule problems. Garnet related well to the people and ran Task Forces in Renton, Wichita, Philadelphia (Vertol) and Portland eventually going to Japan to help Boeing’s Japanese suppliers. These were some of his more enjoyable experiences because you could see the tangible results of your work including reduced man hours required and schedules that were met. In 1976, Garnet was selected as the Renton Division “Employee of the Year.”

One of his last assignments in Renton was on the new 737-300 program. Some thought the 737 was coming to the end of its’ sales potential but Jack Steiner felt there were more opportunities. The company agreed to allocate \$250M to build the 737-300. It was to be a minor derivative with new engines, new wings, and an extended body. Garnet was chosen to be the Operations Director and Bill Williams from Product Development was the Chief Engineer. Joe Sutter decided we needed more composites on the airplane to reduce weight. Dick Taylor felt the plane need a “glass cockpit” like the new 757 and 767’s. Pretty soon a new interior showed up. During testing it was discovered that the wiring had to be re-located due to rotor-burst considerations and the rear end be “beefed-up to handle potential stall buffet. So our modest 737 derivative ultimately more closely resembled a nearly new airplane. The good news was that it

“sold like hot cakes.” The bad news was the program “overspent by \$250 million!” The BCAG Executive VP was W. W. Buckley, an extremely emotional individual. He demanded an accounting for the “over-run” by the individuals responsible. Those turned out to be Wil Magruder (primary estimator) and Garnet (primary spender). They knew they had to be able to tell the story. They used a control room to put up the original work statement and then showed each of the more than 20 subsequent work statement changes. On each they explained the change and the number of new parts required. After spending about two hours explaining the changes and the impact on parts and cost, Buckley turned to Bill Williams and Jack Folsom (Director of Engineering) to ask “did you really do this?” They were honest and said that they really had but pointed out they had a really great airplane that was selling extremely well.

From 1985 to 1987 Garnet worked as the Work Allocation Manager on the 7J7 Program. Coincidentally, Garnet joined Bill Lee on the EMBA Program at the University of Washington. A combination of extensive work travel and demands of studying proved energy sapping. This whole plot only worked because Garnet’s wife Shelagh took on the burden of raising four young children with effectively an “absentee husband.”

Garnet spent most of his career in Renton but in 1987 he moved up to Everett on the 747-400 program. It was 737-300 all over again but on a larger scale. It was another derivative airplane that morphed into a new airplane. There were cost and schedule problems that caused them to be six months late on airplane delivery and \$900M over budget.

One of the best run programs Garnet worked and the model he thinks others should follow was the 777 program. Garnet was the Production Engineering Manager and was fortunate enough to be one of the first 42 people on the program. He was the Operations co-leader on the design build teams working with Dick Johnson who was designated by Alan Mulally to put the engineering side together. Dale Hougardy and Mulally were DBT number 1 and Dick Johnson and Garnet were DBT number 2. If somebody had told Dick and Garnet they would be responsible for putting together 242 DBT’s involving over 5,000 engineers and ME’s all over the world, Garnet would have said “no chance!” On each team we had all the team members we needed to address that issue. Working with Dick Johnson was a great experience.

Garnet wasn’t a great lover of computers and when they set him up on Profs it took 42 keystrokes just to logon! On top of that you had to shut down every time you left your office, so after a short 30 minute meeting it took at least 3 minutes just to log back on. Garnet knew that an algorithm could be set up to capture keystrokes to shorten the logon process so he really pushed an IT person he knew to set this shortcut for him even though they both knew it was against the rules. Once that was done it only took 3 keystrokes to get in to Profs. They kept the secret between themselves and that is the way it will stay.

In his later years, Garnet was the Operations Manager on DCAC/MRM working for Bob Hammer. He wasn’t an “IT” guy but he knew all the capabilities from the user side. There was satisfaction in the fact that they put the ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system into 22 of our factories. ERP took the engineering requirements and turned them into production requirements in terms of quantities and schedules. All the parts were tracked through the system until they were installed on the airplane. About 53,000 people were trained on that system. The

original plan was for the ERP installations to be done at low production rates. Unfortunately, system development became protracted and the installations were made when production was rising rapidly. Essentially, the timing to implement major systems/process changes was bad but we went ahead and did it anyway. This gave rise to much friction between resident business managers and the implementers. One unfortunate aspect of this was that it ruptured a few life-long personal relationships that Garnet had with some of his peers.

With the completion of the ERP installations, the Operations (MRM) portion of DCAC/MRM was essentially done. Before re-assigning Garnet, a BCAC Executive VP suggested “he needed to improve his image.” Garnet put this suggestion on his whiteboard in his office and considered how he might best go about this. On reflection, Garnet thought that maybe it might be more appropriate to “improve his financial complexion” rather than “his image.” It was DCAC/MRM that actually provided the opportunity.

DCAC/MRM attracted a lot of attention from the outside, so people were always coming in to see what they were doing. Don Peterson (CEO of Ford and Boeing Board Member) and even T.A. Wilson, who was retired, came in to check on how things were going. One day a government group came in and one of the guys with them asked Garnet “what would it take for them to get him to come down to New Orleans to help them with an assignment at the Integrated Technology Center.” They had a requirement to take all the military payroll systems (about 76 systems) and put them into one system involving about 5 million people. Garnet said “just money” and a few days later the guy came back with an offer. After 33 years at Boeing Garnet decided this was maybe the change he needed. He accepted the offer, gave Boeing a two week notice and retired. He retired from Boeing officially on February 1, 2000 but he actually left the company on November 17, 1999. When he left the company he had over 1300 hours of reserved sick leave. He hadn’t taken a day of sick leave in 25 years.

He appreciated all he had learned during his Boeing career and felt he benefitted from some very good mentors. Principally, in his early years Deane Cruze was a very strong influence. Much later on, Tom Schick provided much support and inspiration. Garnet seemed to have been blessed with the most capable of lieutenants throughout his career, without them he felt his achievements would have been very sparse.

On November 19, 1999 he was in New Orleans, Louisiana working for SAIC (Science Applications International Corporation) as the Vice President of Business Systems Integration. SAIC was an employee owned entity of some 42,000 employees with contracts with every Government Agency—much of it very covert! Compared with DCAC/MRM, upgrading the military payroll system should have been comparatively easy. In fact, at the time there was only one Computer-Off-the-Shelf (COTS) product with the necessary capability. It was made by PEOPLESOFT (now Oracle). As Garnet was to learn—nothing with the Government is meant to be easy, certainly in New Orleans. The political, social, ethnic and business environment is unique within the USA. The Cajun influence extends far beyond food. The payroll program had another one of those ghastly acronyms—DMIRS! After over a year of wasteful studies and virtually no progress the founder of SAIC decided to “no bid” renewal of the contract. He liked the financial margins we were getting but felt that the risk to SAIC’s reputation was far too great. As a post-script, a couple of months ago in the Wall Street Journal there was an article describing

that the DMIRS program had been cancelled and several of the Government/Contractor employees were now under Federal indictment—no surprise except why did it take so long?

A parallel job Garnet had at the Integrated Technology Center was to try and convert it to a Center of Excellence whereby it could be a source of IT and improved business processes that could be applied across multiple military/government establishments. In essence, convert it into a commercial enterprise. In this capacity, Garnet worked directly for the head of the ITC. The government employees assigned to assist were enthusiastic and progress was quick. Each quarter, when the “wheels” came down from Washington D.C. for the Quarterly Review the ITC management got “rave reviews” for their progress in commercializing the establishment. Then Garnet made a fatal mistake, he introduced METRICS to go along with the new processes! The reaction was immediate, “Oh my God, they (D.C.) will know exactly how we are doing!” Garnet was re-directed back to payroll and the assignment given to another contractor who would ensure no further progress on that path would occur.

The lesson to Garnet, a naive north westerner, was that in the New Orleans environment, getting the job done was not the primary goal. The actual objective was to see how much government money could be acquired and then spread around to pockets of influence. The sad fact is that Washington D.C. appears to understand this but seem powerless to change it.

On leaving New Orleans, Garnet moved back to Seattle where SAIC had been awarded a contract to evaluate the data collection system in Flight Test on Boeing Field. The system that existed was 757/767 vintage and of pure Boeing legacy design. COTS packages now exist for much of that activity. Some recommendations were implemented, some were considered too costly. However, due to the Nisqually earthquake in 2003, further recommendations were incorporated.

SAIC was the prime contractor for security at the Salt Lake Winter Olympics and Athens Summer Olympics. So the fall-out from 9/11 and subsequent Homeland Security Initiatives have been a business bonanza for SAIC. Garnet pursued business opportunities related to the Homeland Defense Initiative in the Seaport, Airport, Oil, Aerospace and Railroad industries. Supported proposal efforts to offer security related services and technologies for Operation Safe Commerce (Securing Ocean-going cargo containers) and led the effort to provide the Security Assessment and Plan for the seaports of Seattle, Tacoma and Everett.

In 2004, working with Boeing Customer Support, SAIC developed an integrated system to tie the airlines, hotels, and rental car agencies together in a manner that would facilitate easier customer travel, particularly if the passenger encountered travel cancellations or delays. The whole system was called Global Travel Utility (GTU) and was patented by Boeing. Due to key Boeing personnel changes (retirements, re-assignments) the program never got implemented yet key elements are cropping up today in Expedia and other travel media.

In 2004 he left SAIC. After retiring he set up his own consulting service and does small jobs now. He often works jobs for Sound Air Aviation Services in Snohomish but is starting to phase this down.

In retirement, his two main "community activities were: (1) Serving as Chairman of the Economic Development Committee for the City of Snohomish for 5 years; and (2) As a member of the Private Enterprise Coalition (an Everett business group) working to promote the introduction of commercial airline service at Paine Field.

Garnet spends about a fourth of his year in England. His mother who is 93 still lives there so every 3 months he goes over for 3 weeks. He recently took his mother on her first cruise when he was there which she really enjoyed. Garnet's wife, Shelagh, owns a Preschool and he can't get her to give that up so that somewhat restricts the travel they do together. Their trips are mainly to their timeshares in Cabo San Lucas and Puerto Vallarta.



His other pastime is working in the Japanese Garden he built. He has 608 Emerald Greens and was in the process of "topping" them at the time of the interview. He really enjoys yard work and calls it his therapy.

Garnet and his wife have four children, three boys and one girl, who are all married. He has two granddaughters and is expecting his third granddaughter during this Summer.

